

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 00912 200558Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, HO

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF DEFENSE ATTACHE OFFICE

REF: STATE 033550

I SEE FOLLOWING DISADVANTAGES IN PROPOSED CLOSING OF DAO AT
THIS POST:

1. THE GOVERNMENT OF HONDURAS (GOH) IS CURRENTLY UNDER CONTROL
OF HONDURAN MILITARY FORCES WHO INTEND TO CONTINUE THEIR
ASSUMPTION OF POWER UNTIL AT LEAST 1979 BEFORE CONSTITUTIONAL
ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD.

2. THE "ENTRADA" ENJOYED BY PROFESSIONAL MILITARY PERSONNEL
SUCH AS BETWEEN THE DEFENSE ATTACHE AND HONDURAN MILITARY
MEMA
RS IN POSITIONS OF GOVERNMENT, IS A RECOGNIZED AND
NECESSARY RESOURCE OF THIS MISSION. MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN
THAT HONDURAN MILITARY ARE NOT AS FRANK AND FORTHCOMING WITH
FOREIGN CIVILIANS.

3. THE DEFENSE ATTACHE PROVIDES MILITARY EXPERTISE TO THE
AMBASSADOR AND TO THE DELIBERATIONS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM.
THIS ROLE TAKES ON ADDED SIGNIFICANCE IN HONDURAS IN VIEW OF
THE MILITARY'S CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT.

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4. LOSS OF THE DAO COULD HAVE AN ADVERSE IMPACT ON HONDURAN VIEWPOINT TOWARD THE US. IT WOULD DOUBTLESS BE VIEWED HERE AS A SLIGHT, ADDING TO HONDURAN FEELINGS OF WANING US INTEREST.

5. I AM CONCERNED TOO THAT THIS PROPOSAL COINCIDES WITH PROPOSALS TO REDUCE THE MILITARY GROUP. WHILE I AGREE THAT THE SIZE OF OUR MILITARY PRESENCE HERE CAN AND SHOULD BE REDUCED, IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE ABOVE REASONS THAT THIS MISSION BE ABLE TO COUNT ON THE EXISTENCE OF A LIMITED MILITARY STAFF FOR THE FOREEABLE FUTURE. IN FACT, SHOULD THE EVENTUAL REDUCTIONS IN THE MILGP REACH THE PROPORTIONS PRESENTLY PROJECTED (I.E. FIVE), OUR PRESENT THOUGHT WOULD BE TO RECOMMEND THAT THE REMAINING MILGP STAFF AT THAT TIME BE INCORPORATED INTO THE DAO. WHATEVER ORGANIZATION EVENTUATES, I FORESEE THE CONTINUING NECESSITY OF A SMALL MILITARY PRESENCE AT THIS POST IF THE OVER-ALL OBJECTIVES OF THIS MISSION ARE TO BE ACHIEVED.
SANCHEZ

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